The Centurion

COVER BY MAXWELL BATES, A.R.C.A.

UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA

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EDITORIAL

Great clouds of boogy dust. What a struggle. But I think we got that ironed out. Imagine an editor's own staff trying to stop him from writing an editorial. Mutiny! Why it's axiomatic. An editor writes an editorial whether he's got anything to say or not. Harry Gregson will tell you that. Now if I can just get out of these ropes. . . .

Well now, that's better. Actually I believe I do have something to say. This here is *The Centurion* and it's a honey. Ask any of the staff, they'll tell you.

But *The Centurion* is more than just a magazine, it's a way of life. Either you are or you're not. You believe or you don't. No room for agnostics. Those who buy *The Centurion* think it's the best little thing since sliced bread, and they consider its creators as worshipful a bunch of psychopaths as ever scotch-taped a sleeping puppy's eyes closed. Those in the other camp lapse into apopleptic fits of indignation at the merest mention of the Big C and they feel that retribution should have caught up with its perpetrators back at Nuremburg.

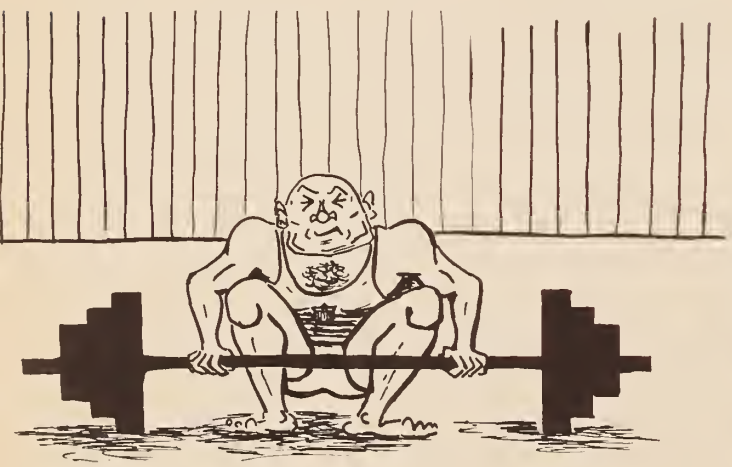
The Centurion has a long and speckled history. But rather than chronicle our epic saga I'll give it to you in one picture. We giggle. That's right, we giggle. Late at night we slink home, slip out of our non-ivy league suits, throw 'em over the mixmaster, click off the A.C., leap into the kip, haul the lily whites up to our nostrils and giggle. Loud and long, because you ain't got us yet. We continue to proliferate like polyps, to permeate like a petrochemical, to proselityse like a pious pilgrim and publish our pamphlet with profuse and prolix punctuality. And we haven't got ours yet. This year we will have seven monthly issues. The magazine is thicker, the format improved and Toad Bell has had his pedicle clipped. What more could you want for your dough?

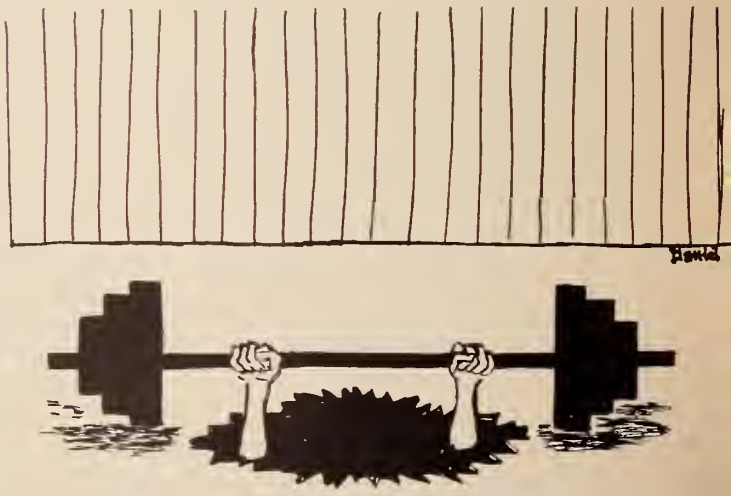
Now here's where you come in, buttercup. We like to think that even you have some latent creative urge nestled way down deep next to your pancreas. Or perhaps you're as utterly barren as we are but simply want to see your 37 letter, printer's nightmare in 10-point type. So now's the time to cough up. Don't stand up there all the day idle; freight your garbage into our vineyard. If it gells you're in like a burglar and then *by Gad you're on you're way*. Remember our motto. We'll run anything you can work into two dimensions, so long as it's good, or funny, or beautiful or interesting to see or read.

And if you're not the type who hammers out religious epics regularly on your coffee breaks, at least drop us a note. Let us know where you're getting your kicks and what books you're reading, and anything you'd like to see in future *Centurion*'s. Our trained staff of chimpanzees will do anything for a good feature. (The Karate job particularly finished me).

If for some curious reason, best known only to yourself, or your neuropsychiatrist, you don't like the magazine, say so. We'll print that too. But don't waste our time if you can't get six words on paper without lousing it up. Criticism should be sharp, incisive and downright vicious despite Emerson.

Finally let me say a word (chuckle, just try and stop me) about our advertisers. Without getting all syrupy about it these guys make the whole show possible. They're a bunch of good eggs. Many of them give a discount to students. They finance our magazine, they have faith, they give us hope, but they don't ask for charity. Just business. So patronize 'em and tell 'em the Big C sent you.





What do you mean we're a bunch of barbarians?!
Daniel Editor-in-chief
looks like a real ehtink
Fats Reid poetry editor
Pat The Spider Zanichelli Sales Director
John the photographer daguerreotypist
Wanda Fund Public Relations
'course, we don't got no wimmens page., but let's face it...
Wabbit Wild Art critic
G. Nixon
CRIS
Prof John Danb
patron saint
smashed outa his skull as usual, the beady-eyed little lush.
Dixi Dum
womans' p
CES
MILLIN
Tony Jenkins
Hell's black Intelligencer
M.S.
CRITIC R.I.P.
TYRO
STYLO
Toad Bell
Fiction editor

KATABASIS

or

A JOURNEY TO THE CENTRE OF THE CAFETERIA

being

An Account Of The Singular Experiences Of One Orgilus P. Baskerville, Freshman, On The Occasion Of His Registration At The University Of Victoria, With Divers Digressions Of Such Nature As To Serve As Both Guide And Solace To Those Intrepid Souls Whose Lot It Shall Be To Undertake Further Such Expeditions In Time To Come.

I, Orgilus Pentecost Baskerville, being restored at last to a state of sound Mind and Body, by the assiduous Exertions of my personal Physician, do humbly submit the ensuing Narrative to such Readers, as may, by the Grace of God, be concerned with these matters, in the sublime Expectation, that it may prove to their subsequent Edification. To Wit:

On the Tenth Day of September, in the Year Of Our Lord Nineteen Hundred and Sixty-Three, at that Hour when rosy-fingered Dawn comes creeping across the golden cornfields, and the feathered Tribes commence their vernal carolling, I presented myself at the cast-iron gates of the Gordon Head Campus, and there appended myself to a considerable Procession of Suppliants, who had ventured forth on their annual Pilgrimage to this hallowed Shrine. As golden-thighed Apollo mounted his brazen Chariot, and with fiery Arrows illumined God's glorious Creation, I cast my eyes about me, and beheld on all sides a Prospect of the Utmost Desolation, such that my feeble Powers must shrink from the merest Attempt to express the sensation of leaden Dread, that now, like the vengeful Achaeans debouching from their perfidious Horse, invaded the inmost Chambers of my quaking Soul. Vast Earthernworks, perchance the Funereal Mounds of those cruel Titans, who erstwhile bestrode the affrighted Face of this fair Earth, impressed themselves upon my perambulating Gaze, and before them dull Files of the most mean of Edifices, more meager even than that Swineherd's Hut, of which the sublime Homer chants, and all about me a noisome Fen, a most foul Blot upon the verdant Escutcheon of the Divine Maker's beauteous Realm, from which there arose the most Rank of Stenches, and upon which the reluctant Pilgrims were driven to embark, ere they attain at last that ensorcelled Canaan, toward whose generous Bosom they must ever strive. Thick fell Phoebus' Darts, as his snorting Steeds drew him higher and yet higher up the enamelled Dome of Heaven, and our footsore Caravan drew ever nigher the Portals of that beaconing Haven that was our Goal. At length an aged Saint Peter, dight in the prideful Vestments of the Canadian Corps of Commissionaires, granted us admission into the Holy of Holies, where our Initiation into the Eleusian Mysteries of the Academic Existence was to commence. And here I beg leave to interpolate certain Observations, which, by the Infinite Mercy of our Sovereign Lord Jesus Christ, I was enabled at this time to make, to wit: that the Serpentine Convolutions of those Regulations, concerning the Require-

"... a considerable Procession of Suppliants ..."

". . . a noisome Fen . . . upon which the reluctant Pilgrims were driven to embark . . ."

ments prerequisite to the Study of certain Courses, the judicious Selection of Subjects appropriate for subsequent Perusal, the Preparation of expeditious Time-Tables, and the like, may indeed prove Snares for the Unwary, as the Apple ensnared poor unsuspecting Eve, but that those Select Few, who overcome them, as pious Aeneas overcame the Blandishments of the painted Whore of Carthage, are ennobled in Spirit and strengthened in Intellect, the better to bear that massive Burden of Studies, that shall be heaped upon them. Moreover, that those misfortunate Souls, who find themselves lost without Guide in the drear Slough of Despond, may proffer an Appeal to the tender Sentiments of an august Upperclassman, as my poor self did appeal to one Mister Gray Eaton, who may perchance take it upon

". . . that massive Burden that shall be heaped upon them . . ."

himself, if I may be pardoned the Use of a Vulgar Colloquialism for the sake of Brevity, which one ever must sedulously cultivate, "to give a hand." I feel it incumbent upon myself, however, to confess that such gracious Assistance is not invariably forthcoming, no more than is anything in this sublunary World, other than God's unfailing Love, and that a certain

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". . . an August Upperclassman . . . may perchance take it upon himself . . . 'to give a hand' . . ."

peculiar Phenomenon, known to the learned Lexicographers of our bountiful English Tongue as "Hazing," has on Occasion manifested itself in the Deeds of even these most Elevated of Spirits. Yet no Viciousness nor Rancour, as the scholarly Olaus Wormius states in the Fourteenth Book of his *Necronomicon*, can besmirch the sublime Purity of these most Aetherial of Souls, and they themselves will hasten to inform the inquisitive Bystander, to the effect that their sole Desire is, in the Common Parlance (once more employed as an Ancilla to Tacitean Terseness), "to have some good clean Fun." And ere I conclude this Digression, I beg leave to give vent to a most dire Warning, to wit: that the Penalties exacted for the Transgression of those inviolable Commandments, whose Enforcement a benevolent Providence has placed in the Hands of the University Authorities, are indeed most severe, and that the prospective Seeker after Knowledge, like prideful and insubordinate Job, would be well advised to exercise the twin Virtues of Obedience and Compliance, lest he be justly subjected to subsequent Chastisement and Punition for

". . . a certain peculiar Phenomenon, known . . . as 'Hazing' . . ."

his Presumption. But to my Tale. Having negotiated the Minotaurian Maze of Registration, whose Complexities I have sworn not to reveal to the Uninitiate, I at last came Countenance to Countenance with that almighty Arch-Spirit, the Daedelus of Academe, to wit: the Registrar himself. Massive and scowling he squats, as austere Moses squat and scowled at the Golden Calf of the wayward Israelites. Great was my Relief, when I ascertained, that certain of the Rumours concerning this Personage, that I had chanced to overhear in the course of the Conversation of my Fellow-Palmers, were marred by a certain degree of Magnification, to wit: that he dines daily on

". . . the Penalities . . . are indeed most severe . . ."

Roast Suckling Child, that he bears upon his vast Fundament the dank Impress of swart Satan's loathesome Lips, &c. For Sweet Jesus will be my Witness, that in even the blackest Hour of my Sisyphan Ordeal, I held fast to the Simple Faith of my Childhood, and never doubted that God, in His infinite Wisdom and Mercy, would at length relent, and desist from heaping on my poor broken Head the smouldering Coals of Torment, that already had reduced my Mortal Frame to that Sad State, from which it has but recently been resuscitated by the Services of that good Minion of Aesculapius, my Physician.

"Massive and scowling he squats . . ."

THE GOOD CENTURION

It's a banner day when *The Centurion* actually manages to do something right. Recently we solemnized our first poetry reading, held at the S.U.B., and managed to lure a hundred-odd souls out to hear Robin Skelton and John F. Danby recite selections from classical and modern writers. Those who feel that a poetry reading is something one ducks into only when caught in a sudden deluge might have done well to attend. These two men, by their happy choice of poems and their dramatic performances at the podium, had the entire audience successively laughing, pondering, luxuriating in rich and sensual imagery, and huddling in their tiny corner of a vast and barren universe.

Robin Skelton, a noted poet and prosodist, may yet singlehandedly revive the oral tradition in poetry. Beyond a doubt, his spirited recitation of Cavaffy's "Waiting for the Barbarians," with its devastating final stanza, was the performance most appreciated by the audience.

John F. Danby, internationally famed Shakespearian scholar, Dean of Arts in one of Britain's leading provincial universities in Bangor, Wales, author of *Poets on Fortune's Hill*, *Shakespeare's Doctrine of Nature*, etc., etc., is one of the most dynamic and unusual men ever to visit the University of Victoria. He swooped down on us like a thunderbolt from the Welkins, hogtied every individual within a twenty-mile radius with thongs of admiration and liking, captivated even the most misanthropic librarian, taught Shakespeare as the old boy had never been taught before, gave impromptu lectures on Blake, Wordsworth, and T. S. Eliot, appeared on television, in the local press, and at the Art Gallery's OXFAM reading, proved a glittering swizzlestick in the local social swirl, paid a prodigious tab at the Snug, then returned triumphantly home, loaded down with all manner of gifts, trophies, and presentations — all in a span of eight weeks! He agreed to the unanimous demand for his return next summer to lecture on the Romantics, God and the English Department willing. How about it, Roger?

His support of and performance in *The Centurion* reading left absolutely nothing to be desired.

Perhaps overshadowed, but none the less noticeable, was the performance put on by Master-of-Ceremonies Daniel, who subtly interwove his introductions with a hypnotic pitch for *Centurion* subscriptions, which would have left a snake-oil salesman of old blinking in unabashed admiration. P. T. Barnum himself couldn't have wormed out of that room without being suckered for the two-clam tariff. The mixture of unction and cheek which our distinguished editor displayed, culminating in his presentation of a first Good Centurion Award to Mr. Danby (see below), a presentation which he made in his stockinged feet, augurs a brief but entertaining existence in store for the dear boy. "It's not so widely known as the Oscar," he intoned, "but we believe it has every bit as much and more in it." Danby's answer was a classic: "Now I know what Shakespeare meant when he said, 'This was the noblest Roman of them all'."

A Blow for Freedom

A one-act play by Lawrence Russell

This play was awarded an honourable mention in the National Playwriting Seminar Awards this summer.

CHARACTERS

DEVELIN, the I.R.A. man

BELL, the British imperialist

LOCATION: London, England

PERIOD: 1960

SCENE

Night. A telephone box and a park bench nearby. UP STAGE the face of Big Ben, the renowned London clock is framed by the silhouette of Westminster. The telephone box is lighted. The face of Big Ben is lighted. BELL is inside the telephone box. DEVELIN is in the shadows, UP STAGE.

DEVELIN: The curse o' Slaney's banshee upon him! An hour it be that I've been stan'ing here waiting on him, foundering in this dark hole. He must be in conversation with auld Nick himself, bargaining fer the possession o' his soul. No mortal reason could induce a man t' stand gassing all this time in yon red box! leave, curse ye, an' let me be about my business!

(The voice of DEVELIN fades with a sigh of frustation. Within the telephone box, BELL continues. The light within the box fades out, leaving the stage in complete darkness. The tower clock strikes the quarter hour. The light snaps back on inside the telephone box. BELL is still inside, but now he is sitting on the floor pursuing his conversation.)

DEVELIN: Why did they pick this night o' all night's an' this telephone box o' all the English Queen's telephone boxes? My throat's parched! I'm dying fer a drink — even a drink o' water would be Kyhan's wine right now. The fool must live in there. The absolute ignorance o' it! Doesn't the clown stop t' think that someone else might like t' use the telephone? Doesn't he realize that a state o' war exists, an' that its business must be carried out? Naw, not him. Get t' blazes out o' there!

(BELL continues gesticulating and talking from his sitting position inside the telephone box. The light goes out. The clock strikes the half hour. The light comes back on inside the telephone box. BELL is still there, but his posture is even more grotesque than before. He lies with his feet up, his shoulders on the ground, his head supported by a proped elbow. A difficult position to attain in the limited volume provided by a telephone box. And from this bizarre position he continues the motions of a conversation.)

DEVELIN: Aw, Jeasus! The ignorance o' the enemy! A specimen o' the supposedly civilized oppressor. A thing like that should be in a circus. But blast him t' hell! How can I get him out o' there? The blow was t' be struck on the dot o' nine thirty. I've been thwarted in the execution o' this delicate task fer the past hour an' a half by this being. I could have been safe in me bed by now! (*Pause*) Damnation! There's nothing else fer it. I can't stand here rotting all night long!

(The sound of footsteps can be heard approaching the telephone box from the rear. They are DEVELIN's. His shadowy figure appears to the LEFT of the box. In his right hand is a small suitcase. He stands, looking into the box at BELL. The latter continues, oblivious of DEVELIN. DEVELIN then walks around the box, glowering in at BELL. BELL continues, unaffected. DEVELIN then moves close to the left side of the telephone box, his face to the glass, and glares at BELL. BELL addresses the audience.)

BELL: Good evening! Or rather good night, I should say. In case you didn't know. I am completely aware of what this character is up to. Oh, yes, indeed! You see, the fact is that I have been selected to foil his designs. We can not allow this kind of thing to continue unchecked, you know. The caravan must roll on! Individuals will have to be kept down. I mean, after all, what would happen to the empire and all that if we didn't?

(DEVELIN knocks the glass pane to attract the attention of BELL. BELL glances up but continues his conversation on the telephone, ignoring DEVELIN. The latter taps the glass once more.)

DEVELIN: Blast ye, get out o' there! Ye know damn fine that I be here, waiting!

(DEVELIN continues to assault the window. BELL's sauve voice once more addresses the audience.)

BELL: Tsk, tsk! It's not difficult to perceive that they have been living in the most servile conditions for the past one thousand years or so. His primitive instinct is rather tedious, I would say. Mind you, it's not as if we didn't try to help them. A firm rule, a plausible religion, a market for their produce — we virtually had to herd them into organization. But then, to coin the cliché, they begin to bite the hand that feeds them!

(The pounding becomes violent. The telephone box vibrates under this determined wrath.)

BELL: Dear me! He is getting rather overbearing. I suppose we must humor him, mustn't we?

(BELL pushes the door open a fraction, towards the audience. He is still sitting on the floor, the phone in one hand. He speaks to DEVELIN.)

BELL: Yes?

DEVELIN: If it wouldn't be too much trouble such like having t' exert yourself past the limit an' all that, I would like ye t' finish with the telephone so as I can get the chance t' use it.

BELL: Well, I will be a few minutes yet. Business, you know.

DEVELIN: See here, mister, ye've been in this thing more than an hour. This be for sure a public phone, an' ye've been taking more than your fair share o' it!

BELL: Sir, I have paid my money, and I am entitled to speak as long as I wish.

DEVELIN: Jeasus, mister, have a heart!

BELL: Have a heart? My good man, just why can't you go to another telephone box if you desire the use of one so acutely?

DEVELIN: Naw, it has t' be this phone . . .

BELL: Why? You tell me why this one is so essential?

DEVELIN: Hell roast it, mister! I don't have t' account fer my actions t' any mortal man! Get out o' that phone box or . . . or ye'll be sorry!

BELL: Threats? Hah! We'll just dial 999 and see what the police will have to say about that!

DEVELIN: Naw, naw, don't do that!

BELL: Well, then, I think you had better go home to bed.

DEVELIN: I can't do that. It's imperative that I use this phone.

BELL: I can assure you that it will be a long wait.

DEVELIN: Sure it's me poor auld mother in Ireland. The woman's on her death bed. Surely ye wouldn't deny her son the right t' speak t' her at this black hour?

BELL: Well no. Why did you not mention this in the first place? (*BELL gets to his feet.*) One cannot stand in the way of the ebb tide of the maternal bond. (*He steps from the telephone box.*) At your service.

(This sudden capitulation on the part of BELL leaves DEVELIN momentarily confused. He hesitates before stepping into the telephone box.)

DEVELIN: Well, thank ye kindly, mister. (*He nods several times at BELL and then steps into the telephone box, carefully setting the small suitcase in before him. After closing the door he begins the motions of making a telephone call.*)

DEVELIN: Mother o' Mary, I thought I would never get rid o' that joker. No more o' these overseas missions fer me after this. I'll stick t' work in the Black North, an' leave England t' someone else. An' now t' strike the blow . . .

BELL: Watch the fool now. These puny efforts of defiance! Emissions of the bestial!

DEVELIN: My God, is that clown still out there? An' I thought he'd buggered off! Aw, I'd like t' blast him too! Half way t' the completion o' the task, an' again interruptions! An' the Chief said specifically that it had t' be done no latter than 9:30. In time t' catch the ten o'clock news. An' he'll have been listening fer it, too.

(DEVELIN opens the door of the telephone box.)

DEVELIN: Mister . . .

BELL: (*Coming forward.*) Ah, finished I see. I will resume that call I was making before.

DEVELIN: Mister, can't ye go somewhere else?

BELL: Go somewhere else!

DEVELIN: Do ye have any Irish blood in yer veins? Any at all?

BELL: I fail to see what this has got to do with the issue . . .

DEVELIN: A cousin, or an aunt or uncle or anybody?

BELL: No one!

DEVELIN: Are ye a Catholic?

BELL: I exist beyond the primitive yammerings of Christianity!

DEVELIN: Mister, think, and think well where yer sympathy lies, for . . . for ye be hindering the execution o' a blow fer freedom!

BELL: What!

DEVELIN: (*Earnestly*) Do ye know the story o' auld Ireland?

BELL: Naturally, my good man. We were there.

DEVELIN: About five centuries o' oppression and exploitation?

BELL: Merely the process of civilizing.

DEVELIN: O' Poyning's Law and the Cattle Act . . .

BELL: The first was an admirable organizing of

the unorganizable. The second was a tremendous piece of mercantalism.

DEVELIN: . . . Drogheda an' Wexford . . .

BELL: *Thorough*, is the word the historians use for Cromwell, I believe.

DEVELIN: . . . the catastrophe o' 1863 . . .

BELL: Deus ex machina. There were too many mouths to feed.

DEVELIN: . . . an' then! (*DEVELIN's voice reaches a patriotic pitch*) An' then glorious 1916!

BELL: Rather dastardly, I thought. Taking advantage of the international situation.

(DEVELIN reaches out and grips BELL by the collar, and gives him that soul-touching gaze as did the Ancient Mariner to the Wedding Guest.)

DEVELIN: Are ye aware o' this tragic but forever glorious story?

(BELL affects to be ruffled by DEVELIN's handling.)

BELL: I fail to see what this has to do with me! And I'll beg you to have the good grace to let go of my collar!

(DEVELIN releases BELL automatically, still engrossed in his speech.)

DEVELIN: The struggle still goes on! Aye, dammit! What do I care if I get caught? I need the blood o' Netchaev in me veins! It's fer the cause! Listen, mister, a blow has t' be struck tonight. Aye, another stab at the accursed ensigna, E.R.II, an' another step towards regaining what is Ireland's!

BELL: What's this?

DEVELIN: The province of Ulster.

BELL: The province of Ulster?

DEVELIN: Aye. British occupied Ireland. (*He grabs BELL by the collar once more.*) An' you — you can aid the cause!

BELL: I?

DEVELIN: So far ye have been the gremlin in this operation. Go, man, go an' ferget what ye have seen an' heard, an' allow the passage o' this mission!

BELL: This is absurd! I haven't the faintest idea about what mission you are talking about. But I do know that I have a telephone call to complete.

DEVELIN: (*Grasping BELL with both hands and shaking him.*) Ye have *no* phone call t' make! Do ye hear? (*He points at the suitcase.*) See this? A three-minute activation when I turn the key! Do ye want t' suffer the same fate as this red abortion o' Her Majesty?

BELL: The man's insane!

DEVELIN: There's enough explosive in this suitcase t' rip this British telephone off the pavement an' sen' it clear into the bowels o' hell! An' I warn ye, clear off, fer this is my mission, an' I mean t' carry it to completion!

(With this DEVELIN closes himself in the telephone box.)

DEVELIN: Jeasus, what a night! (*He fumbles in his pockets.*) Where did I put that key? I'll be damned if I'll welch because o' that four-eyed bastard. It'll mean the C.I.D. down on me before the hour's out, but never let it be said that Jamie Develin failed his country!

BELL: No control on his emotions whatsover. A typical example of the race. Consider themselves beyond authority. Not hysterical, mind you, like some of the others we handle, but lacking in foresight. Uncontrolled initiative is stupidity itself. The fools think that their salvation lies in extremes. However, his step forward in this quest must cease, as of now.

(BELL knocks on the door of the telephone box with authority.)

BELL: Open up, my good man!

(DEVELIN, by this time, has taken off his overcoat in an effort to gain easier access to his inner pockets in search of the key. On seeing BELL at the door he opens it, cursing.)

DEVELIN: Jeasus, yer either stupid or one o' hell's advocates! What is it ye want?

BELL: Do you know what you are doing?

DEVELIN: Agh! Stay around here much longer an' ye'll find out in a way that ye'll never know about it!

BELL: It strikes me that you are going about this thing in the wrong manner.

DEVELIN: What do ye mean? I'm dedicated t' the cause an' I've been duly instructed an' I'm at the objective an' all that's required is to activate the bomb — an' then the blow has been struck!

BELL: It would seem to me that that is a rather futile way of achieving concrete results.

DEVELIN: What the hell do ye know about it?

BELL: I have been engaged in work of . . . er, this nature for years.

DEVELIN: Is that so.

BELL: For instance. You blow up this telephone box. And then what?

DEVELIN: The blow fer freedom has been struck!

BELL: Some blow.

DEVELIN: A tremendous blow.

BELL: The object is, of course, to strike cruelly at Her Majesty's Government?

DEVELIN: It will be symbolic.

BELL: In other words you want people to hear about it.

DEVELIN: The country was to hear about it on the ten o'clock news, my friend, but that's been shafted. The credit fer that being t' yer total ignorance. But, nevertheless, tomorrow morning's news bulletin will do. The press will have it then. Ah! Can ye just see

their faces? The auld colonials will have the equilibrium o' their breakfast shattered. The front page o' the *TIMES*!

BELL: (*Scoffing*) Dreams, dreams, deluded dreams!

DEVELIN: It has been planned.

BELL: They will say it was a gas main that exploded.

DEVELIN: Never! A missing telephone box will be hard to explain.

BELL: Who would want to do such a thing? For what reason? What could they hope to gain? It will never cause a flutter — or more than a shake of the head.

DEVELIN: That's what ye think, eh? Well, we've thought o' that.

(DEVELIN reaches into the pocket of his overcoat and produces a card. It is about eight inches by four inches. He leans against the door frame of the telephone box, holds the card between the two fore-fingers, and shows it to BELL.)

BELL: (*Reading*) "With the compliments of the of the I.R.A."

DEVELIN: Aye.

BELL: This is grotesque! You cannot be serious?

DEVELIN: What do ye mean?

BELL: This is too much! (*Bell affects to be overcome with mirth. DEVELIN is concerned.*) The phraseology! AH HA HA, HA HA!

DEVELIN: What's the matter with it?

BELL: The matter with it is that it's absurd? Good God, man, how many pranksters have used the name of the Irish Republican Army?

DEVELIN: Agh! How many o' them have blown up a telephone box?

BELL: That is immaterial. The authorities will close this up as an accident, rest assured.

DEVELIN: The press 'll be in here like a drove o' pack rats investigating a condemned fish shop.

BELL: They can be easily handled. As I said, a leaking gas main.

DEVELIN: (*Concerned*) Jeasus, don't I know it, too. They were able t' do it well in Ireland.

BELL: Very effectively for centuries.

DEVELIN: It has to be symbolic. If the masses receive neither breath or whisper o' it, the mission has failed, an' the cause unaided. Why didn't H.Q. think o' this?

BELL: Because they lack a true concept of the enemy.

DEVELIN: We've blown them up before! Aye, an' bridges, too. Customs huts, an' Orange Halls, an' all!

BELL: And without any real effect.

DEVELIN: The British taxpayer has felt it.

BELL: Nonsense! Westminster absorbs this in its stride.

DEVELIN: Thousands o' pounds have t' be felt!

BELL: Pah! You create employment. The government has to spend much of its extortions to create new jobs. Your organization is providing an excellent service for the Labour Exchange — especially the work in Northern Ireland. Always suffers from chronic unemployment.

DEVELIN: (*Sudden realization*) We're stabbing ourselves in the back!

BELL: Of course! Guerrilla warfare is no longer a decay. It's slum clearance in disguise. Many people owe much to the economic stimulus provided by your organization.

DEVELIN: This is the death o' auld Ireland.

BELL: If it were not for you a third of the Ulster Constabulary would not be required or any of the B-Special force. It is more money to them.

DEVELIN: Curse the day that we should feed the enemies o' a united Ireland!

BELL: You do see then, what you are proposing to do is futile.

DEVELIN: I can't believe it. It used t' work in the auld days. We hit them from the roof tops in Dublin, we . . .

BELL: There was a concrete enemy, then . . .

DEVELIN: Aye, there was the Tans . . . an' even the Tommies.

BELL: But today there is nothing. You are fighting an enemy of whom you lack a concept. You strike, and nothing happens — immediately, that is. Damage opens the way for the new. It always did. But now there is a difference. In the old days it came at a cost, and that meant something. Today there is not cost. (*Slowly and with emphasis*) We exist on a free national debt!

DEVELIN: (*Strained*) Aw, damn an' curse but the logic sings true!

BELL: (*Murmurs*) Even the mystics are beginning to see the light . . .

DEVELIN: Everything an' everyone against us. Even Leamus, the traitor, he who once rode at the head o' the cause, shoulder t' shoulder with De Valera, has denounced the I.R.A.

BELL: Support has always been a problem.

DEVELIN: (*Sitting down on the floor of the telephone box.*) What can I do? What can we do?

BELL: Well, there is one thing . . .

DEVELIN: Aye?

BELL: Well, you could . . . you do see that I am trying to help you?

DEVELIN: Go on!

BELL: Yes, quite. As I was saying: You could do the same thing in Dublin.

DEVELIN: Blow up a telephone box?

BELL: Of course. You do see the significance of this in the light of our discussion?

DEVELIN: The economic stimulus o' destruction an' all that.

BELL: Exactly.

DEVELIN: That may be right, but . . . aw, dammit t' hell! That's no good!

BELL: No good?

DEVELIN: No good at all. Ye see . . . ye see it has t' be symbolic!

BELL: But my dear fellow, this would be!

DEVELIN: Agh, how can that be so if it's disguised under the employment o' a few souls from the dole?

BELL: I see. It has to be more apparent, you mean.

DEVELIN: It has t' be Irish!

BELL: Ah! In keeping with the national image.

DEVELIN: When people read about it they mustn't think o' it in relation t' pounds, shillings an' pence. A man's life revolves around money. Ah, soulless bastard o' a world that has become like this!

BELL: Then there is only one way.

DEVELIN: What? Tell me, in the name o' Jeasus . . . !

BELL: Remember the song? (*He hums*)

"T'was on a Monday morning,
Another murder for the Crown . . ."

DEVELIN: A Kevin Barry!

BELL: A hackneyed method, I allow. But it always raises a stir!

DEVELIN: I take it that your suggesting that I blow meself t' smithereens.

BELL: Think of the profound horror with which it would be greeted by the populace of Great Britain and Ireland. The masses, while insensitive to the loss of life by the achievement of senility or disease, always retain a certain amount of nostalgia for the unnatural death.

DEVELIN: Suckers fer the melodrama.

BELL: Quite so.

DEVELIN: I don't think it would work.

BELL: But death is the ultimate in symbolism!

DEVELIN: It's against the Church! Naw, I can't do that.

BELL: Church? But surely what you were proposing to do was itself against the Church!

DEVELIN: When one is dedicated t' their belief . . .

BELL: Inconsistency! Does the Church teach you to conquer by force of arms?

DEVELIN: Agh! The Church or anything else must be subordinate t' the Will.

BELL: Then subordinate yourself to the Will!

DEVELIN: Damn ye, your argument's a proxy fer self annihilation!

BELL: Think of the image, man!

DEVELIN: Naw . . .

BELL: Achieve immortality!

DEVELIN: (*Grabbing BELL by the collar.*) Close your mouth, damn ye! What kind o' sucker do ye take me for? Suicide? T'hell. It's only another form o' sexual perversion!

BELL: Let go of me!

DEVELIN: I am wary o' your intents, mister! (*Releasing BELL*) Bah! The step forward'll never be made listening t' the likes o' you.

BELL: You're afraid! You're no patriot!

DEVELIN: (*Grabbing BELL once more.*) Maybe you'd like t' sit in here an' go off with it! Would ye?

(BELL is obviously not in favor of this proposal. He does not answer.)

DEVELIN: Ah, t' hell, if I thought it would do any good I would do it. But there's few enough o' us as it is. It would be like a sheep being thrown into the dip t' kill the maggots an' drowning in the action.

BELL: Blast! There's more insight in this one than I anticipated. Cowardice doesn't enter into his world. He is out of step — out of gear with the universe!

DEVELIN: The auld regime was bad, but the state o' affairs that exists now is worse. The country— naw, the world — flounders in apathy. Half the battle was won, an' then what? They all became partisans under the banner o' greed.

BELL: Well, what are you going to do now?

DEVELIN: What am I going t' do? I don't know. I don't have a clue. I'm plain weary o' it. The whole thing's a bloody fiasco. Maybe I should just throw the contraption away — anywhere, anywhere at all, for I have no vision of what the hell I'm striking at. A gas main would do, just for the bang.

BELL: That would make a tremendous explosion. A whole street, perhaps!

DEVELIN (*Reviving*) Aye, it would be lovely. Man, I remember, the time back in . . . oh, it would be '49 or '50 — aye, b' Jeasus, it was '50! Me an' Mick Mulligan — just the two o' us — blew up an ammunition hut in Ulster. God, what a powerful bang! There must have been two ton o' explosives in there. The whole sky lit up. It cracked the silence as if it were a piece o' glass. The very ground shook at our feet, an' we were a good two hundred yards away at the time.

BELL: And then the air became warm all around . . .

DEVELIN: I dunno about that. Mick an' meself didn't hang around long enough t' find out. The B's

an' the British Army were after us with the hounds in no time at all . . .

BELL: Yet you really achieved nothing . . .

DEVELIN: Maybe so, but . . .

BELL: But still you thought it was worth it. Why? Why?

DEVELIN: It was the excitement, it was the thrill, it was . . . agh, I dunno exactly what it was! But I do know this. There was satisfaction. Aye, there was satisfaction!

BELL: Ah! Everyone is an anarchist at heart. The power of destruction! An innate precept of any living organism. Destroy to survive? Or destroy for the sake of individualism, never to surrender to collectivism or despair? (*To DEVELIN*) Did you feel for the cause — the organization, or for yourself?

DEVELIN: How do ye mean?

BELL: Was it self-satisfaction, or did you — *do you* feel that you are merely doing a job in answer to a command?

DEVELIN: Both, maybe. It was a job done . . .

BELL: But yet it actually achieved nothing!

DEVELIN: Dammit, man, there was a sense o' power! To release that blast by one's own hand — Jeasus, one has t' be awed! Every man has two faces t' the world!

BELL: The world has two faces to man, you mean. The real and the unacceptable. The unacceptable world. The world where man is God, where man is free, free in the spirit of nihilism, and where anarchy has been the revolution. Oh, it's true, it's true. One can fight it, one can live with it, but one cannot ignore it! Man revels in vice! Living with it, fighting with it, or indulging in it, there is a thrill!

(BELL looks at DEVELIN with an insane stare.)

Blow it up, man!

DEVELIN: What?

BELL: Blow it up!

DEVELIN: But nothing will be achieved. It will harm the cause — ye said so yourself!

BELL: To hell with the cause! It's for *yourself*, man!

DEVELIN: But is that reason enough?

BELL: Reason? There is no reason! The act is sufficient to justify itself!

DEVELIN: It's a wild step t' take . . .

BELL: It is a step forward. One must never fear the consequences. The result being known beforehand, there would be no need for the action itself!

DEVELIN: For actions are only questions looking for an answer!

BELL: Act, man! Now!

DEVELIN: Aye! Are ye with me?

BELL: With you? I will be with you to the end, whenever and wherever that will be. We are two facades of the man outside, at war with the world and ourself. (*Emotionally*) The key, get the key and initiate the act!

DEVELIN: (*Fumbling through his pockets*) Where did I put the damned thing?

BELL: (*Placing the suitcase in the centre of the telephone box floor.*) Dead centre. It will split it open like a peeled banana.

DEVELIN: Curse the joker that designed the western garb! Pockets galore with nothing t' put in them, but plenty t' lose in them. Jeasus, I had the bloody thing afore I set out!

BELL: The hip pocket, man!

DEVELIN: I've looked. I've looked in them all.

BELL: You can't have lost the damned thing!

DEVELIN: T' be sure I can't find it!

BELL: Damnation! Search well!

DEVELIN: Nope. Can't be found. Blast the luck!

BELL: Fool!

DEVELIN: I'm still human, mister, an' . . .

BELL: Can't it be detonated any other way?

DEVELIN: Aye, by tripping the time mechanism.

BELL: Well, man, can you do it?

DEVELIN: Oh, Jeasus, but it's a dangerous game!

BELL: Come on! Show me. I'll do it!

DEVELIN: (*Lifting the suitcase and taking to the bench, RIGHT, of the telephone box. They both bend over it.*) There. See where the key fits? Push the lock with your thumb an' the case opens — Jeasus, be canny.

(BELL pushes the lock but the case does not open.)

BELL: How, man, how?

DEVELIN: Just push it. Here, I'll do it.

(DEVELIN produces a knife with which he begins to pry the lock.)

BELL: The damned thing must be jammed!

(BELL moves away from DEVELIN. He is tossing the key belonging to the suitcase in the air and catching it. But DEVELIN does not notice being absorbed in his task. There is a loud snap from the lock, the lid of the case flies open, and a Jack-in-the-box flies out. It waves to and fro grotesquely, the large head laughing idiotically. It resembles BELL. In the background, accompanying the laughter, Big Ben breaks into a mad peal of chimes. DEVELIN, have been momentarily hypnotized by the Jack-in-the-box falls back in a faint. BELL exits, LEFT. The lights go out. CURTAIN.)

A Midsummer Night's Dream

BY JOHN DANBY

Birth is possibly a predicament, maybe an opportunity, but always a necessity: a strange thing however regarded. The first time that we smell the air we waul and cry. We are born into a world that *behaves* comically and tragically. Comedy and tragedy have their roots in the *same soil* co-present with both. They are not contrasted "attitudes" to "life." Life as it is lived spares little time for the delusive prospect of immunity the idea of an attitude towards it seems to hold out. Comedy and tragedy *are*, rather, two ways in which life works.

Birth is involuntary, the world that immediately then confronts us arbitrary. We are placed in a context of incongruities, even in the laws that discoverably suggest incongruity to be aberrant: the chosen laws controlling choice.

The area of tragedy, comedy, and choices, then, stretches between birth and death. And all these are conditioned by the over-ruling incongruity of being alive. Within this area is the discontinuous and also the continuous: what does not fit, or follow, or cause, affronted by that which does; that which interlocks, matches, or leads knowably forward: the one maintaining the other in a mutual aggravation seemingly endless. Tragedy and Comedy are akin through their deriving from the same source: the source which makes choice possible too.

Choice is possible because of the discontinuities among which continuity struggles. One chooses because one is free — but only free to choose. As we say, one *must* choose. Freedom itself seems involved in incongruity.

It is maybe feasible to use the idea of choice and incongruity to "explain" both comedy and tragedy. Given two things that don't so much match as are matched against each other, if one chooses the winner the result is happy, if not the result is dismay. Being on the deservedly winning side is the essence of punitive satire. But suppose one does not or cannot choose between the incompatibles? — as, say, in the case of Falstaff, where our love is involved as much as our fear of the dangerous and reprehensible? The result is hilarious emancipation from the responsibility of choice braced by guilt at having dared to take the holiday — or of having had it thrust upon us: forces that work like a mechanical "couple" to accelerate each other to the point of dizziness or apparent profundity.

The habit of choice can become a bad one (maybe most habits are bad) if we do not allow ourselves to be exposed to the wider fields of choice in which choice must expand and operate. Responsibility has a *hubris* of its own. It requires the *nemesis* of laughter. Choice has to be exclusive. Laughter, even when non-dynamic and most disabling, at least insists on inclusiveness — the rich confusion of mutually supporting incompatibles.

Laughter as a counter-agent preventing choice from becoming self constricting has an important rôle. But Comedy — especially comedy of the non-official, non-punitive type — has yet another dimension. Although its challenge to "order" might be merely disruptive and anarchic, its finer questionings are addressed to "orders" felt to be premature and thereby oppressive. And its more ultimate suggestions of uninhibited joy may mount to the assertion of a witnessable freedom that is also an unrestricted harmony, and properly choice-worthy. All shall be well and all manner of thing shall be well. Freedom is freedom to choose. Choice is in itself desirable, and can be a real opting for what is really desirable. In the end, the operations of our choices (in favour of the good rather than the less good) must stand. In the long run journeys end in lovers' meeting. Life is a Divine Comedy. Only because it is so can tragedy be possible. The laughter of punishment, derision, hysterical bebaffledness, is not the *final laughter*. Choice is not an unfortunate dilemma, nor a self-deprivation. It *is* dynamic, liberating, formative, redemptive. It has its own inclusiveness — maybe the only inclusiveness available. In the divine comedy, in the long run, all manner of thing is included, and all shall be well. Comedy at this level is a wager on moral optimism.

One of the main focal points for the paradoxes involved in Comedy, Tragedy, and birth is of course love. Meredith was more right than he knew when he made the free and equal play of men and women central for the highest comedy. Love embodies, on the one hand, a claim to be absolutely exclusive. On the other hand, it is also the pro-creant bed — the pendent cradle of absolutely rival clamours. It is utterly arbitrary. (Why should one person be "all the world?") It is both a ridiculous trap and a wished-for emancipation. It can range from the idiotic to the angelic. The lover's eye, like the poet's, glances from earth to heaven: so that the one seems to re-

quire and imply the other. Love is a silliness like lunacy, yet it moves the sun and the other stars.

These generalizations are not preliminaries to a reading of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Rather they are results of a reading. Shakespeare, as no-one before him had done, and no-one since, holds together the earthly and the heavenly. He is not more perceptive than Chaucer or Dante, but he accommodates more at the same time. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is one of his most balanced and comprehensive achievements in comedy. Maybe it is the most finely poised, secure and undisturbed statement he makes before he reaches the other security, the stability beyond disturbance, of Cordelia.

The grand enclosing arch of the play is the marriage of Theseus and Hippolyta. The Duke and his bride image the great coherences of love. Before they came together in marriage they had met each other in war:

> Hippolyta, I woo'd thee with my sword,
> And won thy love doing thee injuries;
> But I will wed thee in another key,
> With pomp, with triumph, and with revelling.

This sense of magnificent assurance, of confidently contained savagery almost, continues throughout. We see Theseus and Hippolyta only at the very beginning and end of the play, but they are in fact an overarching presence throughout. It is against their relationship that the other vagarious loves in the play are defined. They are the mature instance of full integration. In them everything has conspired toward happiness. Monarchs in their own right, in their love and power come together freely and for mutual fulfilment. At the end of the play Shakespeare presents them on a commanding height at once regal and informally private: the Duke and Hippolyta are hunting:

> My love shall hear the music of my hounds . . .
> We will, fair queen, up to the mountain's top,
> And mark the musical confusion
> Of hounds and echo in conjunction (IV.i. 115-7).

The brute difference of one thing from another, of hounds and music, is seized on as an opportunity for wresting the completer harmony of conjunction from confusion. Hippolyta takes up the theme and gives it an explicitly archetypal setting:

> I was with Hercules and Cadmus once,
> When in a wood of Crete they bay'd the bear
> With hounds of Sparta: never did I hear
> Such gallant chiding; for besides the groves,
> The skies, the fountains, every region near
> Seem'd all one mutual cry. I never heard
> So musical a discord, such sweet thunder. (IV.i. 118-124).

The music embraces the discord, is in fact only possible by the surmounting of it. Theseus takes up the theme. His hounds are ancient and epic in their pedigree. They too combine animal strength with that almost opposite fresh delicacy which can brush away the morning dew:

> My hounds are bred out of the Spartan kind.
> So flew'd, so sanded; and their heads are hung
> With ears that sweep away the morning dew;
> Crook-knee'd, and dew-lapp'd like Thessalian bulls;
> Slow in pursuit, but match't in mouth like bells;
> Each under each. (IV.i. 125-30).

Hunting at this level and after this style is the natural overlordship of man in all its amplitude, ease, and authority.

Theseus and Hippolyta — myth though they are known to be — are also, in the play, a Duke and Duchess, immediate and contemporary. No sooner than are they established in the first scene than they are broken in upon by Egeus and his recalcitrant Hermia. The path of true love never did run smooth. Even Theseus and Hippolyta fought their way through conflict into marriage. Apparently there is no easy path to perfect union. Or the easy one cannot be guaranteed as trustworthy. Thus, with Egeus and his daughter we confront the fractured situation of competing and incompatible absolutes: love at odds with filial duty. Egeus is proposing Demetrius as Hermia's future husband. Hermia is determined to marry Lysander.

All Shakespeare's comedies move with the reassuring ease of a dance. They have the same lack of worry concerning contradictions that we seem to have in dreams. Choice can sometimes be an arresting and finally maybe paralyzing division of the mind. In Shakespearian Comedy it opens out new possibilities of realization (not always happy) and new lines of action. The Duke's judgment is prompt and unclogged by any deliberation. No sooner is Hermia's case put than it is disposed of. The Duke has a serene indifference to the incidental awkwardnesses that might follow. But the indifference should not be taken as callousness. Rather, it is Theseus' lordly confidence not so much in things as they are, but as they will turn out to be. The judgment is:

> Either to die the death, or to abjure
> For ever the society of men (I.i. 65-6).

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The advice is:

> Therefore, fair Hermia, question your desires;
> Know of your youth, examine well your blood,
> Whe'r, if you yield not to your father's choice,
> You can endure the livery of a nun,
> For aye to be in shady cloister mew'd,
> To live a barren sister all your life,
> Chanting faint hymns to the cold fruitless moon.

The generalization is:

> Thrice blessed they that master so their blood,
> To undergo such maiden pilgrimage

(the Duke sincerely means that the Nunnery stands for something more important than the marriage-bed)

> But earthlier happy is the rose distill'd,
> Than that which withering on the virgin thorn
> Grows, lives, and dies in single blessedness.

The "rose distill'd" can only mean such a fulfilment in happy marriage as that of the Duke himself and Hippolyta. The ironic "single blessedness" of the virgin withering on the thorn is meant to be a dismissal of unwilling spinsterhood, and includes enforced sisterhood in a Nunnery. But what have these to do with Hermia's case — and with his judgment? Hermia is being driven into a marriage she hates by a father indifferent to either the earthlier or the heavenlier happiness of his child. What can the Duke's evasion of her case, his dereliction of humanity mean?

Obviously, from one point of view this is the normal Elizabethan indifference to one-one correspondence between "character" and "plot," what people are and what, in the story, they have to do. But we can sophisticate this conventional discrepancy. What people are, anyway, is always more than anything they can do, such is the muddling congestion of neighbours and jumbling responsibilities. We could then say that Shakespeare knows this, and the Duke too. The choice between a blasphemous imprisonment in a Nunnery, and an inhuman wedlock, is the very opposite of what he would want for himself or his subjects. And it is one he in fact avoids so much as mentioning in his advice or generalization (though his judgment assumes it, of course). What both advice and generalization put forward are the two positive states of blessedness, the heavenly and the earthly, and one negative state: spinsterly misery. It looks, in fact, as if the tenour of what the Duke says (countering his judgment) is a warm commendation of the heavenly rose, or the earthly — or nothing: in other words, virtually an incitement to that dash for freedom the lovers will surely be bound to make. The hint to Hermia and Lysander might then well be — that they should do not what the Duke says, but what he himself (and Hippolyta) would *do*. Dukes know that laws can be as silly as Egeus is. But only silly people bind themselves to silly laws.

In one other way we might read the speech so as to save the Duke from appearing the callously indifferent officer of the law he is clearly not intended to be. We might remember the necessary exclusiveness of love: the feeling that no-one else can "really" have it or even deserve it. In love, "I'm all right, Jack!" is maybe the first reckless law of self-preservation, of love's precarious but not withstanding still exclusive eternity for two: the expression also of the contingencies on which love depends. The Duke's apparent off-hand indifference to the fate of "true love" in this competitive jungle of the accidental is a challenge not a dismissal: true love must prove itself to be so.

There is always in Shakespearian Comedy a grave moral back-drop to the action. The lovers are aware of it. Their play is performed in front of it. Lysander and Hermia know that love guarantees nothing. Nor does life guarantee happiness merely because of love. Happiness in love is an accident: it is not a consequence of loving nor a motive for loving:

> *Lysander:* The course of true love never did run smooth:
> But either it was different in blood, —
> *Hermia:* O cross! too high to be enthralled to low!
> *Lysander:* Or else misgraffed in respect of years, —
> *Hermia:* O spite! too old to be engaged to young!
> *Lysander:* Or else it stool upon the choice of friends, —
> *Hermia:* O hell! to choose love by another's eyes!
> *Lysander:* Or, if there were a sympathy in choice
> War, death, or sickness did lay siege to it,
> Making it momentary as a sound,
> Swift as a shadow, short as any dream,
> Brief as the lightning in the collied night,

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That, in a spleen, unfolds both heaven and earth,
And ere a man hath power to say, 'Behold!'
The jaws of darkness do devour it up:
So quick bright things come to confusion.
(I.i. 134-149).

In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* there is no psychological centre of interest, no concern with the hinterlands of personality, no appraisal of the human situation in terms of what debouches into the deliberating mind, and thence issues through decision into public action. The *personae* derive their meanings from the pattern, and depth is given to the meaning of the pattern by the verse. It is the pattern of the play's meaning, not the character of Lysander, that holds up the weight of:

So quick bright things come to confusion.

Thus when Helena appears and is told of Hermia's decision to run off with Lysander, she at once (too rapidly for psychology but perfect in keeping with the running arabesque of the play's articulated meanings) determines to inform Demetrius. Demetrius will of course follow Hermia and Lysander into the wood, and Helena will follow Demetrius.

The three pairs of (human) lovers in the play exemplify three modes of love: in Theseus and Hippolyta, lucky, unhamperable, and happy fulfilment; in Lysander and Hermia, true love but unlucky and star-crossed; in Helena and Demetrius — both of whom, in the end, come together — love vulnerable by reason of short-comings in one of the partners. Helena's is the sacrificial, pursuing love Shakespeare incorporates also into *The Two Gentlemen* (Julia) and *All's Well* (another Helena). Demetrius is fickle, protean, unfaithful. He is saved, however, from the full consequences of his waywardness, and redeemed into happiness, after realizing his guilty mistake.

The governors of love, of course, under the moon, are Oberon and Titania. Our tendency has always been to whimsify them — just as the lovers have been thought of most often as merely silly puppets in an idle story, and the marriage of Theseus and Hippolyta an opulent, idle but after all merely gilt frame for the pantomime that the play "really" is. Most productions are built up to the bumpkin laugh-makers of Bottom and the artisans who happen to get entangled in a plot and an occasion they can as little comprehend as the plot and occasion of the pitiful tragedy they produce for the great Duke's marriage. Blake's view of Oberon and Titania (itself a rejection of contemporary trivializations of "the Fairies") he gives in *A Descriptive Catalogue &c.*, and it is surely the right one. He puts them with the witches of Macbeth:

> I instance Shakespeare's Witches in *Macbeth*. Those who dress them for the stage, consider them as wretched old women, and not as Shakespeare intended, the Goddesses of Destiny . . . Shakespeare's Fairies also are the rulers of the vegetable world . . . let them be so considered, and then the poet will be understood, and not else.

Blake's "vegetable world" is the farthest fall from Eternity. His negative view of "nature" puts him curiously nearer to Shakespeare in outlook than the later, more nature-indulgent romanticism might suppose. Shakespeare would, to a degree, concur with Blake. For him, too, dull sublunary lovers inhabit a hazardous, imperfect, and thwart environment. This sphere Oberon and Titania rule. They are the governing principles of "vegetable" love. They in no sense represent the harmonious marriage. They have quarrelled about an Indian Boy. They also gird at each other because of their respective (though former) infatuations with Hippolyta and Theseus. As a result of the quarrel —

Therefore the moon, the governess of floods,
Pale in her anger, washes all the air,
That rheumatic diseases do abound:
And thorough this distemperature we see
The seasons alter: hoary-headed frosts
Fall in the fresh lap of the crimson rose;
And on old Hiems' thin and icy crown
An odorous chaplet of sweet summer buds
Is, as in mockery, set. The spring, the Summer,
The childing autumn, angry winter, change
Their wonted liveries; and the mazed world,
By their increase, now knows not which is which,

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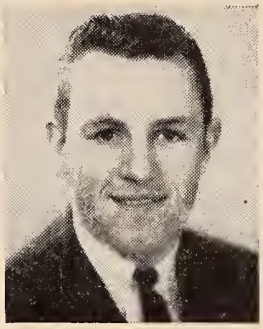
And this same progeny of evil comes
From our debate, from our dissension:
We are their parents and original. (II.i. 103-117).

Oberon is not a reliable providence — not, in fact a providence at all. The rulers of the vegetable world are busy, well-meaning, but always a-moral creatures. They certainly are on the side of "life" and impulse. By them crops grow, or fail; fairy-kings become infatuated with Indian boys, fairy-queens lovers of Theseus, yet capable of falling for an ass. As rulers of the vegetable world they cannot be too narrowly regulated themselves. But neither can they command order from arbitrariness. And in love, throughout the sublunary world, there is a built-in arbitrary factor.

The central symbol for this arbitrary factor is the white flower that Cupid's dart turned purple. The purple flower is what causes one to love — quite absolutely and arbitrarily — one only out of all the world. The juice of the white flower, just as magically, is disenchanting: you wake out of the purple dream to find, suddenly, that you have "gone off people." Alternatively the white flower stands for an imperviousness to Cupid's arrow that implies a more powerful source of enchantment. The two flowers, so slight and so essential to the plot, integrate into the pattern of the play's profounder meanings. Oberon's intentions are good, but he is not an infallible providence: Puck bungles with the flower. The lovers are forced through permutations and combinations. Titania is brought down to Bottom with an Ass's head. But in the end, in the cosmic comic providence of the plot, all manner of things is made well.

Bottom is what his name announces him to be — the bottom: a travesty of the great Duke who presides over the human and social hierarchy, he is a pretender to omnicompetence who turns out to be merely the dupe of the confusions he agitates into existence. He will take every man's part, be everything, roar as gently as a sucking dove. In the pattern he becomes the ridiculous fate Titania's rebellion against her lord calls down on herself. The play he and his fellows put on burlesques both the high tragedy and the high comedy there is in life. In Bottom and his well-meaning amateurs life holds up a solemn and cracked mirror to the art which living is. The pattern however, of the Shakespearean play takes them all up smilingly and compassionately into its meanings. Bottom has had his moment of regal absoluteness, his holiday of omnipotence, even if only in a dream — Bottom's dream: a dream that invites us to imagine it as a shadow of a more ultimate reality than that which deals only in the let-down of anti-climax:

The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen, man's hand is not able to taste, his tongue to conceive, nor his heart to report what [this] dream was. (IV.i. 218-21).



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James F. Moody

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Bottom's reference is to the first epistle to the Corinthians, Chapter two, verse nine.

One final piece of the pattern remains to be fitted in. It is that famous speech in the play sometimes thought of as merely an opportunist courtier-like insertion, Shakespeare's bid for royal favour. It is, actually, the key-stone of the arch of the play's meanings:

> My gentle Puck, come hither. Thou remember'st
> Since once I sat upon a promontory,
> And heard a mermaid on a dolphin's back
> Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath,
> That the rude sea grew civil at her song,
> And certain stars shot madly from their spheres
> To hear the sea-maid's music . . .
> That very time I saw, but thou couldst not,
> Flying between the cold morn and the earth,
> Cupid all arm'd: a certain aim he took
> At a fair vestal thronéd by the west,
> And loos'd his love-shaft smartly from his bow,
> As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts:
> But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft
> Quench'd in the chaste beams of the wat'ry moon,
> And the imperial votaress passed on,
> In maiden meditation fancy-free.
>
> (II.i. 148-164.)

In his general remarks to Hermia in Act I.i. the Duke had referred to a yet higher fulfilment than that of the earthly rose distill'd. Shakespeare identifies it. It is that enjoyed by Gloriana, the Fairy Queen herself: not a governor of the vegetable world, but the imperial votaress, whose command is wider than Titania's, and of whose realm Titania's is merely an enriching part: that part which consists in the soil of the English countryside. Shakespeare is, of course, paying Elizabeth a compliment. But the compliment is not this speech alone: it is the whole play, of which Oberon's speech is the central light. For Shakespeare (as for Milton) chastity was a positive thing: not a deprivation, or an impotency, or a fear, but a dedication such as the imperial votaress might well have had to something more fulfilling and more exacting than copulation.

Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is not only his compliment to Elizabeth, but his compliment also to the Great House, which, under Elizabeth, presided over and was supported by the English countryside. Its *ethos* is Sidneian and Spenserean, but with a Shakespearian addition. The Great House is dynamized and naturalized — of course, in the same process, idealized. Certainly Theseus and Hippolyta are richly human. Love for them is what love is at any level. Actually, too, they are on the side of the runaway lovers rather than of Egeus' deadening legalism. It is fitting that into the house of the great Duke in the end all the players should finally enter: the lovers having passed through their apprenticeship, the mechanicals in their clumsy homage to great love and its pitiful disasters; and the fairies too, the rulers of the vegetable world, accepting a higher fealty, but conscious of their own powers and responsibilities, giving the Great House their blessing, to ensure its continuing fertility. Shakespeare is nowhere more socially optimistic than in *A Midsummer Night's Dream.*

Nor, in conclusion we might say, cosmically so.

We began this outline of the skeletal form of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by animadverting on comedy and tragedy and choice, and how Shakespearian comedy, certainly, lends itself to soundings of experience as serious as those we are accustomed to expect in tragedy. There are indeed in the play several indications of Shakespeare's conscious aware-

I was born in West Virginia;
To Victoria I did go,
But I lost my voice while travellin,
And my heart was filled with woe.

Then I met a fair young maiden
Who told me: "Don't be dense.
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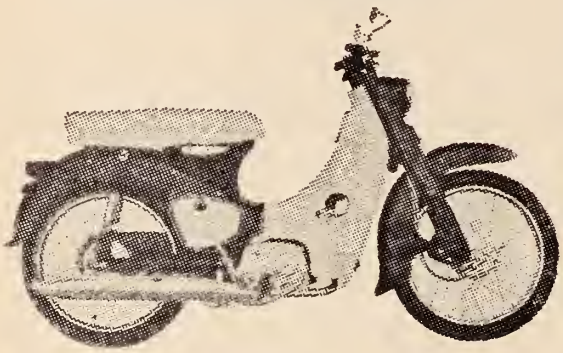

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ness of such questions as the nature of his art, and the inter-relations between "art" and "life." The lunatic, the lover, and the poet are significantly grouped together as Theseus and Hippolyta discuss the status of such shows as they are about to watch. There is also "Bottom's Dream," and the title of the play itself — foreshadowing "we are such stuff as dreams are made on." It is curious that Shakespeare should in the 1590's be concerned with such sophisticated, even decadent one might think, Pinero-like fancies: and Pinero-like dramatic techniques, placing mirrors in front of mirrors that are themselves in front of further mirrors — until the audience is literally confused with what is happening on the stage.

This particular technique is enormously successful in *A Midsummer Night's Dream.* Its effect is to dissolve all psychic distance, to make our frame of "reality" merely one of the number of frames in which Reality can be perspectivated. It makes for the maximum participation and the uttermost liberation. Shakespeare uses the mirrors for a purpose the opposite of the nineteenth century's: not to suggest the emptiness and delusoriness of all that we can see, imagine, and wish for, but to make appearances transparent, translucent to the reals. The audience is beguiled into the hall of mirrors, and in their regressive infinity of *is* and *seems* even this most mind-wearying distinction itself is lost. The spirit steps free into joy: such joy as broods soberly, delightingly, and wonderingly over Bottom when he awakes.

Bottom's speech about his dream is his real epiphany. He is no longer the bumptious parody of omnipotence. His voice is that of the divine comedian. He too has been in the realm of ends that is Gloriana's, partaking of what, in the normal way, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man entered into to conceive: the supreme biblical assertion of man's creatureliness and his angelic potential.

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COLLAGE

The Frameup

When the nearly extinct art fancier stumbles into our local art gallery, the echoes of his footsteps ricochet off the long walls. Like nobody appreciates art these days, and for just being a University student you get free admission any time, 11 till 5 Tuesday through Saturday, and 2 till 5 on Sundays. Also available to University students is the rapidly expanding reference library of fine arts books. The library is open on Thursday afternoons and evenings, 7:30 till 9:30.

Currently showing at the gallery is the "Group of Seven," the first artists to put Canada on the map in the international art world. Now considered slightly tame, these artists of the thirties developed a style distinctively Canadian. Tom Thomson showed them that Canadian scenery offered colours and patterns full of a vitality not to be found in the Turners and Constables of Mother Britain. Simplicity and vibrant textures characterizes the work of the group; unfortunately for the gallery goer it becomes difficult to tell an A. Y. Jackson from an E. A. MacDonald. On the same bill are modern Polish prints and the oils and drawings of Myfanwy Pavelic.

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MADE IN JAPAN

Karate: Art of the Bare-Handed Kill

As any James Bond enthusiast will immediately testify, proficiency in the Japanese art of ballet on Pier Six, which goes under the palliating euphemism of Kara-te (empty hands), is as important today as an E-type Jag in the driveway in the making of a modern gallant. Why, there's just no telling when the average young exec., unobstrusively wending his way to the office or to an uptown dinner-date, will be set upon by the hired assailants of some nefarious foreign power. Needless to relate, such an encounter could prove embarrassing, unless one has previously forged his ninety-eight quivering pink pounds into a murderous engine of combat. But secure is he who has, and who realizes that he can at will batter to blood the most formidable horde of thugs and footpads (or, for that matter, *anyone* at all who happens to slip from grace in his eyes) with a few punitive pirouettes.

Yet the Karate killer's dividends do not end here. Failing an ambuscade of gangland torpedoes, he can easily convert his *uchi-waza* (striking technique) into a scintillating series of parlour tricks. Imagine, for example, the delight of a hypothetical hostess when you completely resuscitate her moribund cocktail party by splintering thick wooden boards with your bare foot, or by shattering several bricks with a single blow of your leathery paw. A walnut coffee-table will serve admirably in the former instance, and decoratice fireplaces are full of bricks just waiting to be dislodged by a good firm *hiraken-zuki*.

It was with just this sort of social success in mind that I recently cajoled one of my cohorts at the local grunt-and-groan studio into helping me convert a little bit of bookish theory, which we had confidently mastered, into kinetic practice. Tony, a flamenco guitarist as well as a fine gymnast, would be just the one to appreciate the more refined aspects of mayhem, I reasoned. We chose the beach as our theatre of operations, not merely for the less punishing area of impact which it offered, but also in hopes of exploiting our newly-acquired death-dealing skill to impart a long-overdue chastisement to a few dozen of those knock-kneed Neanderthals which, Charlie Atlas assures us, prowl the shoreline solely for the opportunity to kick vast amounts of sand into the faces of their less atavistic brethren. To memorialize the event we took along John-the-Photographer, who caught the accompanying snaps at one-five-hundredth of a second.

After a few hours of violent rough-and-tumble, we had gained a new insight into Karate. First: it's lethal, even as a sport. Second: the art of landing correctly is every bit as important as that of delivering a blow. Finally: it's a good thing to pass up. Bruised, bedraggled, and sunburned, we hobbled from the beach. John managed to exceed his former obscenity record (1956 Helsinki Olympics), cursing vigorously in eighteen different languages and dialects, some now extinct, as he attempted to expel the sand from his precious lenses. Tony was stiff as a pump-handle for two weeks. To this day he displays a pronounced phobia of *sukiaki* and avoids transistor radios like the pox. Me? I'm all right, but I'll sure enjoy getting back to solid food once the wires are out.

—DANIEL

Tony opens hostilities with a good solid *yoko tobi geri* (flying side kick). This particular technique is most commonly used as a surprise attack, but may also be used, after dodging opponent's attack, as a counter-attack, usually to the side of the neck. In sequence: (1) Tony, catapulting out of a jump-squat, seems to hover beside the impregnable fortress that is Daniel's chest. (2) Wham! Impact. The impregnable fortress is shocked, shivered, and shattered to its foundations, and crumbles instantly. (3) Follow-through. Tony comes in for a three-point landing.

Daniel retaliates with a similar strike. Note much better form in delivery. Thrust-out arm makes ruler-line of attack, and takes advantage of Newton's third law. Note also completely hopeless recovery for landing. To quote Hidetaka Nishiyama, instructor of the Japan Karate Association: "In the flying kicks it is extremely important to withdraw the leg close to the body immediately after kicking in order to maintain balance on landing, since it is at that point that you are most vulnerable."

Pure Karate becomes tainted with elements of combat judo. Here is a good example of what the boys at Murphy's Bar would call the ol' flying mare. By leaning back after your opponent has begun his descent, you can get a whip-lash effect which proves especially necrotic. Karate throws do not differ from those used in Ju-Jitsu or other grappling sports. What distinguishes them is that they are not an end but a means to create an opening for a focussed attack, and are invariably used in conjunction with, and to take advantage of, the force of other attacking or blocking techniques.

A most effective yet simple throw is the hip-toss. Such a motion would be followed immediately by an *empi-uchi* (elbow-strike to the solar plexus). Caught at one-five-hundredth of a second, the figures are distinct at the vortex centre yet blurred at the peripheries, giving an indication of their circumferential velocity. Note the important arm movement giving the thrown body a breakfall. This, as any Judoka will assure you, is one of the least spectacular yet most vital disciplines of the sport. The last throw is a similar manoeuvre,, illustrating the additional force gained by a sharp twist.

The final photo depicts the effects of a *shuto-uchi* (knife hand-strike). Daniel suddenly remembered to show Tony this technique as they shook hands to conclude the donny-brook.

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Just released in paperback: George Cuomo's first novel, *Jack Be Nimble*. It's very funny and all about college life.

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ODE TO WALT WHITMAN

By Federico García Lorca

translated from the Spanish by Jack McIntyre

Federico García Lorca (1899-1936), Spain's most popular poet, is probably best known for the "Gypsy Ballads," which he wrote out of his Andalusian heritage and his romantic career, ended so tragically by the Spanish Civil War. Lorca's considerable influence on modern poetry is in large part due to the vein of surrealism that runs through his imagery and makes his work so striking, This vein is readily apparent in his "Ode to Walt Whitman," considered one of his finest poems.

By the East River and the Bronx
boys were singing, bare to the waist,
with the wheel, the oil, the leather and the hammer.
Ninety thousand miners tore silver from the rocks
and children drew scales and perspectives.

But none slept,
none would be the river,
none liked the large leaves,
none the blue tongue of the beach.

By the East River and Queensborough
boys were fighting with industry,
and Jews were selling to the faun of the river
the rose of circumcision
and the sky poured forth through bridges and roofs
herds of bison driven by the wind.

But none paused,
none would be a cloud,
none sought ferns
nor the yellow wheel of the tambourine.

When the moon comes out
pulleys will turn to tumble down the sky;
a limit of needles will encircle the memory
and coffins will carry off those who do not work.

New York of slime,
New York of wires and death.
What angel do you carry hidden in your cheek?
What perfect voice will tell the truths of wheat?
Who, the terrible dream of your stained anemones?

Not for a minute, beautiful old Walt Whitman,
have I stopped seeing your beard full of butterflies,
nor your corduroy shoulders worn by the moon,
nor your thighs of virginal Apollo,
nor your voice like a pillar of ashes;
beautiful ancient one, like the mist
that moaned like a bird
with its sex transfixed with a needle,
enemy of the satyr,
enemy of the vine
and lover of bodies under the coarse cloth.

Not for a minute, virile beauty
who on heaps of coal, posters and railways
dreamed of being a river and sleeping like a river
with that comrade who would place in your breast
a small pain of an ignorant leopard.

Not for a minute, Adam of blood, male,
man alone in the sea, beautiful old Walt Whitman,
because on the rooftops,
crowded in bars,
leaving the sewers in bunches,
trembling between the legs of chauffeurs
or spinning on platforms of absinth,
the fairies, Walt Whitman, dreamed of you.

That one as well! As well! And they precipitate
themselves
onto your chaste and luminous beard,
blonds of the north, Negroes of the sand,
shouting and gesturing crowds,
like cats and serpents,
the fairies, Walt Whitman, the fairies
disturbed by tears, flesh for the lash,
boot or bite of the riders.

That one as well! As well! Tinted fingers
point to the shore of your dream
when a friend eats your apple
with a slight savour of gasoline
and the sun sings round the navels
of the boys that play under the bridges.

But you were not seeking the scratched eyes,
nor the pitch-dark swamp where children sink,
nor the frozen saliva,
nor the curved wounds like a toad's belly
that fairies carry in cars and terraces
while the moon lashes them in the corners of fear.

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You sought a nakedness that was like a river,
bull and dream that would join the wheel with
seaweed,
father of your agony, camellia of your death,
and would moan in the flames of your hidden
Equator.

For it is right that man does not seek his delight
in the jungle of blood of the coming morning.
Heaven has beaches on which life can be avoided
and there are bodies that ought not to be repeated
at dawn.

Agony, agony, dream, ferment and dream.
This is the world, friend, agony, agony.
The dead decompose under the clocks of cities,
war passes crying with a million gray rats,
the rich give their mistresses
little illuminated moribunds,
and life is not noble, nor good, nor sacred.

Man can, if he wishes, conduct his desire
through a vein of coral or celestial nakedness.
Tomorrow loves will be rocks and Time
a breeze that comes asleep through the branches.

For this reason I do not raise my voice, old Walt
Whitman,
against the child that writes
a girl's name on his pillow,
nor against the boy who puts on a bride's dress
in the darkness of the wardrobe,
nor against solitary men in clubs
who drink with disgust the water of prostitution,
nor against greenglanced men
who love man and burn their lips in silence.

But yes, against you, fairies of the cities,
with swollen flesh and filthy thought,
mothers of mire, harpies, sleepless enemies
of Love, that allots crowns of joy.

Against you always, who give boys
drops of foul death with bitter venom.
Against you always:
Fairies of North America,
Pájaros of Havana,
Jotos of Mexico,
Sarasas of Cadiz,
Apios of Seville,
Cancos of Madrid,
Floras of Alicante,
Adelaidas of Portugal.

Fairies of the world, murderers of doves!
Slaves of women, bitches of their boudoirs,
opened in squares with the fever of a fan
or ambushed in frozen landscapes of hemlock.

Let there be no quarter! Death
springs from your eyes
and piles gray flowers on shores of slime.
No quarter! On guard!
May the perplexed, the pure,
the classic, the famous, the suppliants
close to you the doors of the Bacchanalia.

And you, beautiful Walt Whitman, sleep on the
banks of the Hudson
with your beard toward the pole and your hands
open.
Soft clay or snow, your tongue is calling
comrades to guard your bodiless gazelle.

Sleep, nothing remains.
A dance of walls shakes the meadows
and America drowns in machines and tears.
I want the strong air of deepest night
to take flowers and letters from the arch where you
sleep
and a black child to announce to the gold-loving
whites
the advent of the reign of the ear of wheat.

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YES, JIMMY DOSN'T IT?
IT'S ALSO CALLED A GOOF TUBE, JIMMY.
KUBULIOWA!
COME BACK NEXT WEEK, JIMMY, AND I'LL SHOW YOU SOMETHING CUTE YOU CAN DO WITH A decongestant vapor cylinder
Daniel